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ABSTRACT

Language study is classified through a series of definitions of important terms such as dialects, register, speech production, and function words. The content of communications is examined by attributing content to linguistic mediums. An example is presented to illustrate that teaching a language entails more than merely teaching grammar. The attribution of content to mediums other than linguistic ones is also discussed; for example, linguistic visual mediums are usually coded by their literal meanings. While it appears that determining content areas for instruction is simply a matter of relating student needs with teacher lessons, in fact a high level of interrelation exists between areas of language study. Language instruction requires attention to many different areas of language. A teacher can adapt teaching approaches such as the grammar translation method, the audiolingual approach, and situational language teaching by attributing the teacher's preferred area of content to the lessons. In this way a teacher can integrate all aspects of language instruction into the syllabus. (RW)

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I DIDN'T DO WELL IN HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH.

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I. More than grammar -- What we teach when we teach language

When people at parties ask me what I do, I don't say I teach English anymore. When I used to say I taught English to non-native speakers of the language, people always reacted by saying "I didn't do well in high school English." When I used to ask what they meant by their statement, most said that they

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didn't do well in grammar. Soon after their comment, they drifted away from me. Whether they stopped talking to me because they feared I'd begin to correct their grammar, or because they found me boring, I can never know. But I do know that they tended to equate the study of a language with the study of grammar. Given the fact that schools are named grammar schools and that the bulk of test items on many examinations assess grammar, I can hardly blame them. But I do think that language involves more than grammar. In this presentation, then, I want to suggest some areas with short definitions and examples, I will show how the areas can be attributed to a reading passage. After suggesting some ways to alter the proportion of different areas of language study, I will conclude by reiterating that many arguments about different methods are partly arguments about different areas of language.

While most people walk away from me at parties as soon as they hear I teach English, some stay, including other English teachers. I often ask them what they consider to be the content they teach so I can compare what they think with what students think. In addition to mentioning the names of textbooks, readers and newspapers, and after they indicate they teach reading, writing, listening and speaking, the most frequently mentioned areas of content are grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

Below is a table with short definitions and examples to illustrate my own response to what I teach as a language teacher. The areas are meant to be illustrative of what I mean by language study. (The letters on the left are simply abbreviations for the areas.)

Table 1. One person's classification of language study

lc	context	The setting communications occur in: in reading, the title or cover; topic
ld	dialects	In Florida, they say "Stand in line" and in New York "Stand on line."
lo	discourse	The analysis of conversation: turn taking, use of power, sequencing; pauses, markers and fillers
la	format	The artistic or graphic design and layout of material; speed and loudness of speech, amount of background noise.
lf	functions	Use of mediums to interest, seek knowledge, pray, demand, request, etc.

lj	genres	Characteristics of poems, short stories, essays; literary criticism
lx	grammar:form	Appearances of words that signal ways languages work.
lxf	function words	The, at, through, did and other words we can list that serve as glue.
lxi	inflections	Suffixes, internal changes in words for agreement, tense signals: ed.
lxw	word order	"Fire help" to mean get rid of workers or seek aid due to flames, depending on position each word occupies.
lz	grammar:meaning	Tense, parts of speech, singular, plural, etc.
ll	lexis:literal	Naming: "That's a book." Factual meaning: "Plants have leaves."
ln	lexis:non-literal	Figurative, historical, humorous, idiomatic, ironic, meanings, etc.
lm	mechanics	Spelling, formation of letters, holding of a pen or pencil
lq	punctuation	Use of question marks, capital and lower case letters, indentation
lr	register	Usage of different social groups and classes
le	rhetoric	Organization of passages, logic, sequence, details and main idea, etc.
ls	sound	Pronunciation
lsb	blending	Reductions: he's for he is; gonna go for going to go
lsg	segmental	Consonants, consonant clusters, syllabification, vowel sounds, etc.
lsl	sound/letter	Correspondence between sound and spelling; phonics
lsp	supra-segmental	Intonation, stress and rhythm and tone
lh	speech production	Your tongue should be up. The voice box vibrates. Look at my lips.

lk	style & usage	That's florid. Use that word in polite places only. Slang, etc. shifts from formal to informal to intimate, etc.
lt	ties:cohesion	Connections between paragraphs and sentences--noting what it refers to
lv	ties:collocation	Ties between words: A desert can be arid but not your throat.
lw	ways of life	Patterns of thinking, feeling, living, etc. of different groups
lwa	actual	What people from different age, sex, ethnic, language groups actually do.
lwi	interpretive	Novels, soap operas, satires, magazines, plays, artistic productions and other products that contain a point of view and attempt to interpret the patterns of life of different groups
lu	unspecified	When the area of language cannot be determined or when more than three areas are contained in the same communication. When two or three areas are contained in the same communication, I note the fact by simply writing an l for language.

As you can see, except for format, la, both the terms and their meanings are similar to those often used in conjunction with different types of language study. As for format, I use it to highlight the fact that we get meaning from how words are arranged as well as the words themselves. To some, the major difference between a poem and prose is a matter of format. When a child learning to read can recognize Coca Cola, Jello and Crest on a soft drink can, a dessert container and a tube of toothpaste, but cannot recognize the words typed on blank cards, they are getting information from format. The way the letters are printed, the colors used and the shape of the containers provide some information. Knowing that different size print as well as position or color may distinguish the paragraphs in a text from captions under pictures means we understand the area of language I call format too. Publishers who produce both tabloid and full size newspapers realize the importance of format to many, knowing that some people buy one newspaper rather than another partly because of different size: la.

II. Not inherent -- Determining the content of communications

A. Start at the beginning -- Attributing content to linguistic mediums

I note the content of communications on the basis of the content attributed to them because the particular areas of language are not inherent in communications. The title of Excerpt 1 It done begin, for example, can be used as a sample of a dialect of English: 1d, a model to practice pronunciation: 1s or an illustration of how pidgin forms one tense: 1x, to name a few areas.

In classes, there are three main ways we can determine what areas of language are being attributed to communications. We can note what is said in announcements. If a teacher says "I want to produce verbs" we know many of the following communications are likely to contain grammar. Verbs in questions also suggest the content that is likely to be attributed to words. The verb define in "Define blunderbluss" attributes literal meaning to a word: 1l. "Pronounce blunderbluss" attributes pronunciation to it: 1s. Spell would attribute mechanics to it: 1m. Had one person said "I blunderbussed my way in" and another said "Add a verb--blunderbuss is a noun," grammatical meaning would be attributed to blunderbluss: 1z. Feedback, thus, provides the third way for us to know what content is being attributed to a communication, though, as I will show later, the most frequent feedback contains no indication of what areas of language are being taught.

Because any area of content can be attributed to any communication, we are reminded that we can use a passage designed to illustrate grammar to teach and learn other areas as well. And, it means that any materials not specifically prepared for studying language can be used to study language.[2]

In Excerpt 1, It done begin, I have contrived a series of questions and announcements to illustrate how each area of content I specified in Table 1 can be attributed to lines in a pidgin version of Genesis.

Excerpt 1 It done begin*

		Communication	Content attributed to Communications
1	Teacher:	(holds up a picture of a garden with no people, then a picture with a godlike figure standing above the garden, then two men with wings on them fighting, then two people in the garden with no clothes on)	1c context

Excerpt 1 It done begin, continued

		Communications	Content attributed to communications
2	Teacher:	Now, open your books to page 22 and read title.	
3	Class:	(open books and read title)	
4		It Done Begin (printed in the middle of the page)	
5	Teacher:	This passage is written in a dialect of English called pidgin.	1d dialect
6	Student:	Teacher I.	
7	Teacher:	Remember, Jean, in a formal setting like a class, we request a chance to speak by saying "Excuse me," not "Teacher I."	1o discourse
8	Teacher:	Now, note that his excerpt from the Bible is not divided into columns as passages are in many Bibles and note that there are numbers printed next to the lines so we can refer to the lines by number.	1a format
9	Teacher:	Now, look at the first two paragraphs and notice the numbers by each line and notice some differences between pidgin and the way you write English and speak English.	
10	Class:	An de Lawd, He done go work hard for make all ting dey call um Earth. For six day de Lawd He work an he make all ting--everyting He go put for Earth. Plenty beef, plenty cassava, plenty banana, plenty yam, plenty guinea corn, plenty mango, plenty groundnut--everyting. An for de wata He put plenty fish, an for de air He put plenty kinda bird.	1d dialects + 1a format

Excerpt 1 It done begin, continued

		Communications	Content attributed to communications
		After six day de Lawd He done go sleep. An when He sleep, plenty palaver start for dis place dey callum Heaven. Dis Heaven be place where we go live after we done die, if we no been so bad for dis Earth.	
11	Teacher:	Now, in the next few lines, there is some reported speech and some actual quotes. Read the lines and write down the way the language is being used in these comments--whether to regulate, to imagine, to be social or for some other reason.	
12	Class:	(look at these paragraphs) De headman of dem angels, dey call um Gabriel. When dis palaver start for Heaven there be plenty humbug by bad angel, dey call um Lucifer. An Gabriel done catch Lucifer an go beat um. An palaver stop, one time.	1f functions
		An de Lawd tell Gabriel he be good man too much an He go dash Gabriel one trumpet. An Lucifer go for hellfire where he be headman now.	
		After, de Lawd done go look um dis ting dey call um Earth an He savvy dat no man be for seat. So de Lawd take small piece earth and He go breathe--an man day. An de Lawd He go call dis man Adam.	
		De Lawd He say: "Adam, you see dis garden? Dey call um, Paradise. Everything for dis garden be for you. But dem mango tree that be for middle garden dat no be for you. Dat tree be white man chop, dat no be black man chop. You no go chop um or you get plenty pain for belly. You savvy?"	

Excerpt 1 It done begin, continued

		Communications	Content attributed to communications
13	Teacher:	Name some.	1f functions
14	Student:	"You no go chop um" is regulatory.	
15	Teacher:	Tell me a few things about the passage that make it different from a short story.	
16	Student:	It fits on one page--shorter than a story.	1j genres
17	Student:	It has no developed characters --it's a tale.	1j genres
18	Teacher:	Underline the articles in first 12 lines.	
19	Students:	(most underline de, some, incorrectly, underline an as well)	1xf grammar: form function word
20	Teacher:	What is the form of the third person singular in the passage?	
21	Student:	The base form--no s suffix.	1xi grammar: form inflections
22	Teacher:	What is the position of no?	
23	Student:	It's usually before the verb.	1xw grammar: form word order
24	Teacher:	What is the tense of this; He done go work hard in line 1?	
25	Student:	Past.	1z grammar: meaning
26	Teacher:	Draw a groundnut.	
27	Student:	(draws a shape like a figure eight)	11 lexis: literal
28	Teacher:	Does white man chop in line 29 mean forbidden food or food made and grown by white men?	

Excerpt 1 It done begin, continued

		Communications	Content attributed to communications	
30	Student:	forbidden fruit.	1n	lexis:non-lite
31	Teacher:	Turn your passages over, and spell these words: cassava, yam, guinea, palaver.		
32	Student:	c-a-s-s-a-v-a	1m	mechanics
33	Student:	j-a-m	1m	mechanics
34	Teacher:	Try a y.	1m	mechanics
35	Teacher:	Now, look at these lines, and write the words that are capitalized other than those that start a sentence.		
36	Students:	(look at these lines and write words)	1q	punctuation

An Adam he say: "Yessah Lawd, I savvy. Later comes the fall:

Den de Lawd done come back for Earth and he go call Adam. But Adam he no be for seat. He go fear de Lawd an done go for bush, one time. Again, de Lawd call: "Adam" an Adam he say with small voice: "Yessah Lawd." An de Lawd He say, "Close me, Adam, close me." An Adam he close de Lawd.

De Lawd say: "Wassa matta, Adam, why you go for bush?" An Adam say: "I no get cloth Lawd, so I no want dat you done see me naked." An de Lawd He be vex too much. He say: "What ting dis--who tell you no be naked?" Den He say: "Ah ha, you done go chop dem mango from tree for middle garden." An Adam say: "I no chop um Lawd. Dem woman you done make for me, she go put um for groundnut stew."

Excerpt 1 It done begin, continued

		Communication	Content attributed to communication	
		Den de Lawd He make plenty palaver an He done drove Adam and Eva from Paradise. John Gunther's Inside Africa*		
37	Teacher:	Who do you think the audience would be for this dialect of English?		
38	Student:	Maybe those who haven't been to school or go to schools in poor sections.	1r	register
39	Teacher:	In the spaces next to the lines, draw stick figures with names to to show the chronological development of the passage--put days of the week or dates to show the chronology too.		
40	Students:	(draw stick figures and put numbers next to lines to show chronological organization)	1e	rhetoric
41	Teacher:	Say whether I'm blending these words or saying them with clear distinctions between them: I get no cloth Lawd IgetnoclothLawd	- --	
42	Student:	First one is not blended or reduced.	1sb	sound blending
43	Teacher:	Make the sound the article starts with in this passage.		
44	Student:	/d/	1sg	sound segment
45	Teacher:	What letter signals that the r is not to be pronounced in the proper name of God?		
46	Student:	a and w		

* P. 739. Copyright by Harper and Row, 1953, 1954, 1955. Quoted with permission of publisher.

Excerpt 1 It done begin, continued

		Communications	Content attributed to communications	
47	Teacher:	Draw large boxes and small ones to show which syllables in the words I say receive heavy and weak stress. palaver ___		
48	Student:	(draws ___ ___ ___ ___ ___	1sp	sound supra segmental
49	Teacher:	Take this sock, and holding it next to this diagram of the mouth, tongue, teeth and lips, move it to show where it should be for the initial sounds for these words: de, palaver, Dem, trumpet		
50	Student:	(moves sock on hand to appropriate places on diagram)	1h	speech production
51	Teacher:	How would you characterize the style of this passage? serious or humorous?		
52	Student:	Humorous	1k	style & usage
53	Teacher:	Draw arrows from the connecting words in sentences that are tied to other sentences. For example, in line 23, So connects or serves as transition for the previous sentences. Connect it to the sentence it is related to, and draw lines from other similar words.		
54	Student:	(draws a line from So on line 23 23 to He savvy dat no man be for seat)	1t	cohesion
55	Teacher:	What is inappropriate about this sentence, given this variation of Genesis? (line 23) So de Lawd take small piece earth and he created man day.		

Excerpt 1 It done begin, continued

		Communications	Content attributed to communications	
56	Student:	created	1v	collocation
57	Teacher:	Are the yams mentioned here the same ones you eat at Thanksgiving?		
58	Student:	No. These are white and much larger.	1wa	ways of life actual
59	Teacher:	I think you can see from reading this passage that our ways of thinking about creation are affected by the ways we live, think and feel.		
60	Teacher:	Now, for homework, read the passage again.		
61	Class:	(read the passage for homework)	1u	unspecified

The purpose of Excerpt 1 has been to illustrate how any area of language study can be attributed to a passage, or any other text or material, not to advocate changing the areas of language study in communications we make. What content should be attributed to materials can be decided on the basis of present proportions, frequency and intensity of errors in each area and purposes of a course. But if nothing else, attributing all areas of language study to the same passage highlights the fact that knowing a language means more than knowing grammar. To make sense out of anything we take in, we seek information from as many aspects of language as we can. The range of content attributed to the pidgin version of Genesis also serves as an alternative to the common practice of devoting nine out of ten questions about a passage to vocabulary--1l: lexis:literal or 1n:lexis non-literal or to meaning in general, which I note with 1u for unspecified areas of language study.

B. Show the yam -- Attributing content to mediums other than linguistic ones

Just as the bulk of questions in many reading classes would be coded 1l, 1n or 1u, since they concentrate on vocabulary or meaning in general that requires knowledge of say a few areas combined, so the bulk of many questions in classes where non-linguistic visual mediums are used would be coded 1l:lexis literal. In my experience, this is true because when we employ objects in a class or pictures we usually ask people to name items.

But an object such as a plastic snake can be used not only to illustrate what the word snake refers to; it can also be used to communicate other areas of language study. When a student says "He has four book," one could hold up a plastic snake as a reminder to add the siblant, s. Snakes hiss, afterall. Or, if one wants words inverted, as after a person says "You do understand?" meaning "Do you understand?", one can shape the snake like the symbol used for inverting: ∿ . Doing this attributes content to the snake I'd code lxw: grammar word order. Contrasting a snake with a plastic crab, one could illustrate paragraphs that were direct with those that were going in many directions. In this case, I would attribute the content le: rhetoric to the two objects. Whether attributing content to objects other than ll would lead to confusion or the development of many separate associations, one cannot say until one has tried the alternative by breaking the normal rule: attributing only lexical content to objects and pictures.

The content of gestures tends to be constant too. Some teachers point over their shoulder with their thumb as if they were trying to hitch a ride to indicate past tense, thus attributing lz: grammar meaning to a gesture. One could also shake one's fist after a student said sink for zinc or pick for bic--the name of a brand of ball point pens. The shaking fist would indicate that the initial sounds should be voiced, thus attributing the content lss: sound segmental to them. Or, the fingers of the hand can stand for details in a paragraph and the thumb can stand for the main idea, and thus be coded le for rhetoric. Rather than suggesting that teachers get their fingers out of joint or be accused of being contortionists, I am simply reminding you that we can attribute each area of language study to gestures as well as passages, texts, or pictures and objects.

Obvious as the fact is that we can attribute a great range of areas to many different mediums, certain areas always tend to be attributed to certain mediums. In dictionaries, for example, pictures almost always have only lexis attributed to them. A picture of a mushroom will accompany the definition but both have the same content attributed to them. Phonetic spelling is used to show pronunciation. As you compare dictionaries, see not only the extent to which sketches are limited to lexis, but also which other areas of language are treated in different dictionaries, and which areas are ignored. Discovering the areas ignored would provide you with an opportunity to develop a dictionary which did what no other ones do. As you browse through different dictionaries, note some of your findings, and perhaps speculate on why some are always covered and others always ignored.

III. Congruence, integration and attention -- Purposes for noting different areas of language study

On the surface, determining the areas of content to teach or learn seems easy. It is just a matter of congruence between student needs, determined by errors or observed problems, and teacher lessons. If a student has difficulty with sound, treat sounds: 1s. If a student doesn't know individual word meanings, treat lexis: 1l. If a student continually leaves off the third person singular inflection on verbs, teach es so that he go will become he goes: 1xi--grammar form, signalled by inflections.

Such one-to-one congruence implies that the areas of language study are separate and in no way interrelated. In fact, separate areas of content that make up language are interrelated, perhaps explaining the frequency of 1u for unspecified areas of language. Thus, telling a student about the position of his teeth--1h: speech production--may as likely alter pronunciation as multiple rules, labels or repetitions of the sound itself: 1s--sound. In Excerpt 1, literal meaning of an individual word such as cassava is aided by knowing the story occurs in the tropics 1c--context. The literal meaning of dash might be guessed by knowing that after a good task is performed in many places, a reward is given: 1wa--ways of life. The tense of verbs in pidgin is as likely to be figured out from the fact that stories tell what happened--1j: genre--or the context--1c--showing pictures with no current items in them, as from the form of the verbs: 1xf or 1xi. The spelling of the as de and Lord as Lawd--1m--in Excerpt 1 is as likely to help pronunciation as stress on the sounds of the words themselves: 1s. Though given the fact that Chicago is closer to the pronunciation of Shacago reminds us of the problem of depending on mechanics--1s--to aid pronunciation in all cases.

Said another way, teaching separate areas of language study based on congruence with student needs might have to be juxtaposed with the integration of separate areas of content. If areas of content are consistently taught separately on a one to one correspondence between class material and student needs, try the opposite: integrating separate areas of content.

Another reason integration might be tried is that the use of two separate areas can draw attention away from a problem area. When students know we're working on grammar--1x--as in "There aren't any books here," they often remember to produce the utterance correctly. Outside of the class, when the attention is shifted to actual books and away from form, students often falter. By using different objects in class, and thus shifting attention from 1x to 1l, it is possible less faltering will take place. Constant shifts between different areas of language being focused on and on others that distract is an alternative to try if tasks tend to consistently focus on only one area of content at a time.[3]

Still another reason for trying to integrate separate areas of language study is that the boundaries between the areas overlap. Though theoretically we may pick up grammatical signals from something we hear or read to understand it, we probably pick up grammatical signals plus lexical or contextual or format or ways of life signals at the same time. We may understand groundnut because we are reading about the tropics--context--or because we know British English--dialect--or because we know what ingredients go into stews in parts of Africa--ways of life. In deciphering a secret code, code breakers use many different signals they pick up. In the same way, as we try to understand, we receive signals from many areas of language. Which ones we pick up is not an easy task to determine. But asking questions to force students to notice both different areas and the integration between pairs of areas will remind them that if they fail to follow something because they don't pick up the signals communicated by say grammar, they need to feel free to pick up signals from context and style or grammar and sound or other combinations that together make meaning clearest.

As you begin to make announcements or ask questions that attribute different areas of language study to texts or materials you use, you can begin to specify feedback in the different areas of language study as well. The ubiquitous "OK" or "very good" I consider unspecified and note such feedback with an lu for area of language unspecified. Even the popular "He go?!" as feedback to "He go" I consider unspecified. Just because a teacher knows a student is leaving the es inflection off does not mean the student does. Astonished intonation in a repetition can mean any number of things are wrong.

One obvious alternative to unspecified feedback in comments like "OK" or "very good" is specified feedback in comments like these: "Very good pronunciation" or "The inflection is right" or "Agreement is one hundred percent." Naming one of the areas of language in Table 1 changes unspecified feedback to specified. If the words in Table 1 are too technical, student generated labels can be used. "Clue words" serves as well as "function words." "Vocabulary" can easily replace "lexis."

Another alternative to unspecified feedback is the unheard-of one: providing specific feedback both to the language area that is correct and to the language area that is incorrect. In Excerpt 2 Two ways, I juxtapose the usual rule of providing unspecified feedback with specified feedback to both what is right and wrong, a rare alternative in my observation.

Excerpt 2 Two ways

		Communications	Content
	One way		
62	Teacher:	2 plus 3, please	
63	Student:	Faibu. (Student is a native speaker of Japanese)	
64	Teacher:	Faibu?	1u
65	Student:	Hai	
66	Teacher:	Who knows the right answer?	
	Another way		
67	Teacher:	2 plus 3, please	
68	Student:	Faibu.	
69	Teacher:	Good addition.	ss*
		Bad pronunciation.	1sg
		Pronounce it as one syllable	1sp

*The ss stands for specified area of study other than language, in this case arithmetic.

Here's another example. After a student says, "My throat is very arid, and I'd like a glass of water," the teacher says "nice grammar; the fourth word doesn't fit; the collocation is wrong." One can also say "I'm thirsty too" or give the student a glass of water before the treatment of the error with specified feedback. In the beginning, some students may perhaps be confused by the labels in Table 1, by the juxtaposition of so much information, and by being given a glass of water. Over time, though, students may learn the labels, or develop their own, and begin to see the many areas of language that they know and can develop.

The content of feedback can be clear in some cases without specifying the area of content, as Excerpt 3 At a bar illustrates. The act of spelling out the word makes it reasonably clear that the language area being treated is mechanics.

Excerpt 3 At a bar

		Communications	Content
70	Waiter:	Would you like a cocktail:	
71	Bar customer:	I'd like a Pimms' Cup.	
72	Waiter:	A Pimms' Cup?	
73	Bar customer:	Pimms' Cup--p-i-m-s	
74	Waiter:	(Goes to the bar to check)	
75	Second customer at bar:	It's p-i-m-m-s	1m--mechanics
76		There are two m's.	1m--mechanics
77	Bar customer:	I think he got the idea though.	

Whether the students get "the idea" with specified or unspecified feedback can only be determined by trying each alternative. If you never indicate a specific area of language when you react to student communications, specify an area from Table 1. When students make mistakes, try specifying the area the error is in and the area that is acceptable.

If the terms in Table 1 are too technical for you, or the students, use others. If ties or cohesion are too unfamiliar, try fit and doesn't fit. If ways of life is too cumbersome and culture has too many connotations, my way, his way, DeGaulle's way can be substituted. Terms generated from students, from books on language or from classroom exchanges are as suitable as those in Table 1. The point is not a particular term but to specify the distinct area of language study that we are providing feedback in.

IV. Trends--Changing areas of content reflect different schools of language teaching

Even if you aren't sure of the value of specifying separate areas of language study either in feedback, announcements or questions, looking at the different areas of language can provide some insight into language trends. In fact, one way to look at trends in language teaching is to explore the areas of language study that are advocated by different schools of language teaching. Grammar translation emphasized the meaning of grammar--1z --and literal and non-literal lexis: 1l and 1n. Audio lingual advocates substituted the form of grammar--1x--for meaning--1z.

And they substituted sound and speech production--1s and 1h--for lexis--1l and 1n. Realizing that context affects meaning, some introduced situational language teaching, thus highlighting context--1c. English for specific purposes has emphasized the importance of functions--1f. And new trends in teaching writing highlight ties--1t--as well as rhetoric--1e, grammar--1z, mechanics--1m and punctuation--1q.

If nothing else, realizing that language teaching requires us to give attention to many different areas of language may free us from the endless wild swings of the pendulum from one area of language to another. It also means that no matter what methods school a text was developed for, we can adapt it by attributing any area of content we want to the lessons in the books we use.

Whether attention to many separate areas of language rather than a selected few will decrease or increase the "I didn't do well in high school English" syndrome, perhaps at the least, future guests we party with will at least attribute their dislike of language study to a wider range of areas of language than grammar. Then at least the conversation can be varied, with some feeling weak in functions, others inadequate in speech production, a few lacking in rhetoric knowledge, and still others in ways of life, and even a few from the good old days who feel totally inadequate only in grammar or style and usage.

NOTES

1. One area of inquiry that has explored different areas of language we need to know is mis-cue analysis. A good source for seeing a taxonomy of areas of language is Findings of Research in Miscue Analysis: Classroom Implications, edited by P. David Allen and published jointly by ERIC and the NCTE in 1976.

2. This is hardly a new idea. Richard Allwright from the University of Lancaster has frequently urged that a central criterion for selecting materials for second language teaching be that they not have been prepared especially to be used with non-native speakers of the language.

3. The audio lingual method, at least as urged by Robert Lado has urged that "what is needed is practice that will gradually force the students' attention away from the linguistic problem while forcing them to use language examples that contain the problem." page 105 Language Teaching--A Scientific Approach, published by McGraw-Hill in 1964.

REFERENCES

Should you be interested in other categories for generating alternative in your teaching and in looking at teaching non-judgmentally, I have written about these topics in the following articles.

1977. "Beyond Rashomon--Conceptualizing and Describing the Teaching Act." TESOL Quarterly, Vol. XI, March.

1978. "Breaking the rules of the classroom game through self-analysis" in Teaching English as a second language: Themes, Practices, Viewpoints. New York: New York State English to Speakers of Other Languages Bilingual Educator's Association. ERIC ED 145 720

1980. "It's too damn tight"--TESOL Quarterly, Vol. XIV, June.